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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000936

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/NCE, DRL/IRF, AND INR/GGI

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KIRF](#) [SOCI](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP NOVEMBER 22, 2005

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 888

[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 876

[1](#)C. BRATISLAVA 694

[1](#)D. BRATISLAVA 904

Classified By: DCM Lawrence R. Silverman for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

RUSKO LOSES TV STATION; SHOOTS HIMSELF (ACCIDENTALLY)

[1](#)1. (C) Pavol Rusko, former Minister of Economy and leader of political party ANO, sold his majority voting share in Slovakia's Markiza television station to American company Central European Media Enterprises (CME). As predicted reftel B, the ANO party -- which started the year with 11 MPs, a television station, and as a member of the governing coalition -- is now left with a three-MP opposition party without its TV mouthpiece. With a new political party being formed by ANO breakaway leader Lubomir Lintner (ref C) and ANO's polling figures languishing at a level below the parliamentary threshold (see para 7), the loss of the station represents a political blow from which Rusko will not likely recover.

[1](#)2. (C) Though he is now USD 16 million richer, Rusko stirred up more controversy by releasing a video recording he made in secret of a conversation with now-independent MP Iveta Henzelyova. In the video, Henzelyova describes a coalition attempt to purchase her vote. Henzelyova has publicly contested the authenticity of the recording, and has ignited a debate over statements by politicians President Gasparovic (HZD), Vice Chair of parliament Bela Bugar (SMK), and Chair Pavol Hrusovsky (KDH) to the effect that, if the allegations of corruption are true, parliament may not have the "moral" authority to continue its work. COMMENT: The statements by Bugar and Hrusovsky clearly implicate their coalition partner SDKU. However, we note that, even in the event that the video is deemed "authentic," Henzelyova's statements may not be entirely accurate, as she was under duress -- and not under oath -- during her conversation with Rusko. END COMMENT. Meanwhile, the police have begun an investigation and Rusko has made claims that he has a second tape.

[1](#)3. (SBU) After losing his TV station and stirring up a maelstrom, Rusko captured the headlines again by accidentally shooting himself in the leg. On the night of November 13, Rusko was reportedly cleaning a hunting rifle at home when the gun accidentally discharged, striking Rusko in the calf. His bodyguards responded and took Rusko to a local Bratislava hospital.

SKINHEADS ATTACK PATRONS AT BAR AND ON TRAIN

[1](#)4. (SBU) Following the November 4 skinhead attack that resulted in the death of student Daniel Tupy in Bratislava (reftel D), several other skinhead attacks have been reported across Slovakia. A small group of skinheads attacked visitors to a Piestany bar on November 11, sparking a brawl that involved 29 people. Over the weekend of November 12-13, a group of 8 skinheads attacked passengers on a train between Zilina and Bratislava. While no one was seriously injured in the attacks, police contacts tell us that two of the "most aggressive" skinheads were detained and interrogated. Press reports further indicate that the train conductor -- who neglected to help the passengers -- was withdrawn from service. Tupy's killers remain at large.

NGOS RALLY AGAINST "SLOTALITARIANISM"

[1](#)5. (SBU) NGOs in Zilina, where the controversial right-wing mayor Jan Slota continues to head an opaque and often-criticized administration, held a concert against violence on November 16 at the Stanica art center. The concert was billed as "Citizens Against Violence (And Slotitarianism)," a pun that will likely catch on as citizen groups continue to organize against the mayor. (NOTE: Slota also serves as the head of the anti-minority Slovak National Party and was once quoted as saying the answer to the "Roma question" was "a small yard and a long

whip").

SLOVAKIA ACCEPTED AS MEMBER OF ITF

16. (U) On November 15, Slovakia was accepted as a full member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF). As a member of ITF, Slovakia will continue its efforts to educate its public about and appropriately commemorate the Holocaust, an effort it began in 1990 and which continues today.

POLLS SHOW SNS AHEAD OF KDH, SDKU

17. (U) Polling data released November 15 shows that Smer remains the most popular party in Slovakia, with 30 percent of the public supporting Fico's populist party. Fico remains Slovakia's most "trusted" politician, according to another poll, although his ratings have declined. While former Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's HZDS comes in second with 12.7 percent and the Slovak Hungarian Coalition (SMK) third with 10.6 percent, the surprise fourth is Jan Slota's Slovak National Party (SNS), with 8.7 percent. Following SNS is KDH (8.5 percent), the Communist party (8 percent), and Freedom Forum (SF, with 7 percent). Prime Minister Dzurinda's SDKU party received 6.3 percent preference, placing it just ahead of Rusko's beleaguered ANO party, which received the support of only 2.8 percent of the public in the poll.

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